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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH  
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20014  
September 29, 1971

Dr. Joshua Lederberg  
Department of Genetics  
Stanford University School of Medicine  
Stanford University Medical Center  
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

Thank you for your letter of September 23, 1971, which expressed an interest in the centers for research in human genetics currently being considered by this Institute. I regret that there is no printed material available, since the program is, as yet, in its planning and pilot stages.

As you may know, the National Institute of General Medical Sciences supports a large body of genetic research, including research in human genetics. The bulk of this work is supported by individual project grants, and we continue to feel that such instruments should be the dominant instrument of support for genetics. However, much work in human genetics, and particularly medical genetics, is necessarily a team effort, involving interactions on a variety of fronts and the pooling of human and capital resources. Thus we visualize the center of support as providing the funding instrument to permit flexible interactions, and coherence between clinicians, biochemists, population geneticists, etc. Therefore, center grants in human genetics of the type we have in mind would be expected to have the following characteristics:

1. They would have a rather broad scope, covering a broad spectrum of human genetic disease, from genetic counselling to investigations in the molecular aspects of dysfunction. The program of this Institute is directed to the genetics of disease rather than specific genetic diseases which are the concern of the categorical institutes of NIH. Hence, studies of specific genetic diseases, in depth, within one of these centers is justified only on the basis that if these are expected to contribute to overall knowledge of the genetic basis of disease.
2. Corresponding to the broad scope, a variety of disciplines, often cutting across departmental lines, would be represented. Applications for the center would have to demonstrate cohesion and patterns of collaboration.
3. The funds requested would, of necessity, be larger than for the usual research project grant, and should represent the dominant form of support for the group.

If you feel that your research plans, and the plans of colleagues and collaborators correspond to these characteristics, I would be most pleased to initiate discussions with you along these lines.

Sincerely yours,

Fred H. Bergmann, Ph.D.  
Program Administrator  
Research Grants Branch  
National Institute of  
General Medical Sciences